

evils of Papal taxation. As Parliament had pointed out, the French ecclesiastics holding benefices in England used their endowments against the English arms in France.¹ But there was another scheme of national robbery more extensive still. The Pope claimed and exercised the power of taxing the Church in his own right. However great the distress of the country, the Papal collectors were always at work gathering great sums of money from the monastic and secular clergy. In this way the produce of English land was sent over-sea to pay for Gregory's wars in Tuscany and the Romagna, while the English exchequer was necessitous, and the English shores undefended.

Under these circumstances young Richard's advisers seriously considered the policy of stopping the export of money to Rome. Wycliffe, though actually under the ban of the Pope's bulls, was requested by the King to draw up an answer to the question * Whether the Realm of England can legitimately, when the necessity of repelling Invasion is imminent, withhold the treasure of the Realm that it be not sent to foreign parts, although the Pope demand it under pain of censure and in virtue of obedience due to him/ Wycliffe used the opportunity to draw up a telling pamphlet in which he answered other questions beside the one asked. * The Pope/ he said, * cannot demand this treasure except by way of alms and by the rule of charity. But this claim of alms and all demand for the treasure of the realm ought to cease in this case of our present need. Since all charity begins at home, it would not be the work of charity, but of fatuity, to direct the alms of the realm abroad, when the realm itself lies in need of them/ The Pope's claim rested on the fact that the English Church was a part of the Catholic Church. Against this, Wycliffe urged the unity and self-dependence of England, lay and clerical, as one Commonwealth. * The Realm of England, in the words of Scripture, ought to be one body, and Clergy, Lords, and Commonalty members of that body/ holding from God the power of self-defence, and therefore the power to refuse Papal taxation If they thought right. Wycliffe goes on to strengthen his case by an argument which he would not

¹ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 19. 32. 33.